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CASE STUDY OF BLACKJACK DEALERS;
THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT AND
THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH MANAGEMENT

by
Linda Anne Weintraub

A project submitted to the
Faculty of the School of Food, Hotel and Travel Management
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ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
School of Food, Hotel and Travel Management
Department of Graduate Studies

M.S. Hospitality-Tourism Management
Presentation of Thesis/Project Findings

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the memory of Joe Burt, CEO of the Aladdin Hotel, whose help was instrumental in getting this project off the ground.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A woman is concentrating intently on her cards. In front of her is a stack of \$500 chips. She has bet \$2000 on this hand alone. A crowd of people sensing the drama watches her intently. It is just she against the blackjack dealer. The pit boss is looking over her way and is concerned with the amount of money that is stacked up in front of her. The blackjack dealer looking impatient and bored is urging the woman to either signal for the card or stand on the cards she has. Instead of being friendly and courteous the floor people are watching the dealer to see if he is going to break her. Ultimately the woman wins the hand. But instead of sticking around so the casino can win back some of the money she won, she sweeps the chips into her purse and prepares to cash out at the casino cage. As she gets up from the table, she remarks to the impassive, aloof dealer, "Thanks for the lousy playing atmosphere. You can be sure I will never play here again!"

This particular casino has lost a very important and valuable customer all because they cared more about bottom line profit than about her playing experience. This unpleasant experience of not being able to develop a good relationship with the dealer, the floor manager or even the change person is all too common in today's casino environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to provide a basis for improving relations between front line blackjack dealers and casino management so that quality customer service can be implemented in the casino gambling atmosphere. The study will try to make casino executives realize the necessity of shifting old paradigms to focus on providing dealers with a pleasant work environment. The happier the dealer, the happier the player is likely to be. This will improve the casino's bottom line in the long run.

Incidence of the Problem

Unfortunately, the problem of an unpleasant playing experience, a poor work environment for the dealers, and a tense relationship with management is all too typical in many of the larger casinos in Las Vegas. According to Michele Comeau, co-author of Casino Customer Service -- The Win-Win Game (1992), very few Las Vegas casinos pay any attention to customer service. More likely, management is concerned with making the table action "hot" and keeping a constant vigil over the dealers. This atmosphere of poor working conditions and constant security to make sure dealers do not cheat or steal is not conducive to implementing a 'quality service' program.

Importance

This study is important because it looks closely at how casino management can improve dealers' working environment and motivation levels so that dealers in turn, can provide players with quality customer service.

Significance

The significance of these findings should have a great impact on the way casinos manage their employees in the future. They will increase motivation by providing a pleasant environment and appropriate compensation. Casinos are just one of the many forms of entertainment available to consumers today. With more and more of the American public accepting gambling, the casino industry has changed the name to "gaming" putting it into the entertainment arena to make it more acceptable. As a result, casinos compete with a wide variety of entertainment companies for customers' discretionary income.

As documented in the 1991 annual report of Bally's Manufacturing Corporation, riverboat gambling, lotteries, and cruise ship gambling are now competing with casinos. Riverboat gaming and casinos on Indian reservations are taking potential customers away from traditional casino markets.

Because of different gaming options, the traditional casino market is shrinking. The advent of the mega-resorts such as the

Mirage, MGM Grand, and Caesars Palace mean that only the casinos that provide dealers with a pleasant and challenging work environment, and emphasize the critical importance of quality customer service will survive (Thompson & Comeau, 1992).

Problem Statements

How do blackjack dealers feel about their work environment and their relationship with management? What motivates blackjack dealers in performing their job and how does this impact the level of customer service they provide to the player?

It is critical for casino management to implement an internal program focused on a possible improvement of the blackjack dealers' work environment. This study will provide casino executives with a starting point for improving relations and working environment for all levels of casino employees so that the vision will be constantly focused on exceeding player expectations.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study is that there is no difference between dealers of the two casinos.

Assumptions

For this pilot study, two assumptions can be made. The first assumption is that at least two casino managers would allow the casino to participate. The second assumption is that casino

blackjack dealers are willing to take the time on their shift breaks to answer the questionnaires and provide informal feedback.

Background

The gaming industry has had a long history of high employee turnover, low job security, and low dealer motivation. Poor dealer relations with casino management has a negative impact on the motivation to provide players with quality customer service and a friendly, exciting playing atmosphere. (Thompson, Comeau, 1992)

Quality customer service is practically nonexistent because dealers are on their feet eight hours a day and are constantly monitored by the pit bosses and floor managers. The dealers know they can be reprimanded at the slightest provocation or infraction of the strict rules and regulations. Dealers have to put up with smoke blown in their faces as well as rude, nasty language from players who lose money. Who wants to be friendly and polite to the customer under these circumstances? In the past when conflict arose, casino management has always sided with the players and the blackjack dealer is always wrong. (Thompson, Comeau, 1992)

Most casinos are not as successful as they could be due to lack of concern for dealers and their work environment. Blackjack dealers, along with all front line casino employees are the medium through which the casinos and customers relate. If dealers have low motivation and poor working conditions, it makes sense that

they will not go out of their way to be particularly friendly to customers.

This study will show that the traditional model of service management as put forth by Albrecht, (1992) Zemke, (1989) and others might not be applicable in the casino industry. One reason why this traditional model of quality service might not work is because large amounts of money constantly changing hands reminding the dealers how intensely they are being watched (Thompson & Comeau, 1992). This lack of trust on the part of management does not mean that an improvement in the relationship between casino management and blackjack dealers is impossible but that a different approach to improving the internal climate between floor managers and blackjack dealers has to be more realistic.

Methodology

1. Questionnaires and informal interviews were used that were not tested for reliability and validity. 2. The pilot study used descriptive research to provide casino management with a detailed model for implementing an internal service focus. A convenience sample will be used to provide the basis for research. The statistical program for social sciences was used to tabulate the results of two questionnaires administered to the convenience sample of sixty-six dealers from two casinos in Las Vegas, Nevada; one located downtown and the other is on the strip. The questionnaires were personally administered during a period of five

days between June 2 and June 6, 1993. The questionnaires were administered by the author in the dealer's breakroom. A predetermined number of dealers (thirty to thirty five) from each casino was set by the author and her advisor prior to the administration of this survey. This study encompassed the blackjack dealers involved with high rollers as well as the "grinds" (those whose average bet wagered was \$5 or less).

This pilot study was based on two questionnaires. Copies of these two questionnaires are found in Appendix A. The questionnaire that relates to dealers' work environment consisted of twenty-five statements which was developed by the author. Blackjack dealers were asked to circle the number on a Likert Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree that best represented their feelings about the truth of the statements. The second questionnaire was a motivational ranking survey of the ten factors blackjack dealers believe is important to them in their working environment developed by Richard Darder and Dr. Goll. Dealers were asked to rank these factors on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important factor and 10 being the least important.

Definition of Terms

- Dealer:** a person dealing the game of blackjack to a group of people (up to seven or eight players).
- Floor Person:** the dealer's immediate supervisor, usually roaming the pit among the roulette, blackjack and craps tables. He or she is called over to resolve any problems between dealers and players. He authorizes any change of personnel and looks out to make sure that all money and chips are exchanged properly.
- Cashier:** person behind the glass cage that exchanges chips for money.
- Change Person:** person who gives out rolls of quarters in exchange for one, five, ten and twenty dollar bills.
- Grind:** low roller, person who bets small amounts of money.
- Comp:** complimentary room, food, and beverage usually given free to players who gamble large amounts of money.
- High Roller:** players who drop large amounts of money at the tables without regard to the amount won or lost.
- Toke:** dealer's tips.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to better understand the casino work environment, discussion will first center around traditional theories about service excellence and customer-driven service organizations. After this discussion, a thorough explanation about the casino industry and the blackjack dealer's work environment will be presented so the reader can get a basic understanding of why a new strategic model must be presented to casino management.

In traditional service-oriented companies a total and absolute commitment to quality service is evident throughout the company. Quality services is necessary today because American customers are better educated and demand better treatment than ever before. Companies that expect to survive in today's very competitive environment must always put their customer's interests first. A customer who is treated well at the time of his or her individual "moments of truth", will become a very loyal customer. A "moment of truth" is defined as each time a customer comes into contact with some part of the company. Research has shown that each loyal customer represents long term revenue which is very valuable to the company. It is well known that it is five times more expensive to get new customers than to retain loyal ones. Any customer who leaves a company because he or she is dissatisfied with the products or services the company is offering costs that company

thousands of dollars in potential spending. What's worse is that these unhappy, potential customer spread to their hidden network of friends (potential customers) the negative stories of horrendous service or poor product quality.

Customers today, whether they are purchasing a tangible product such as a computer or an intangible service such as a hotel stay are not just concerned about quality but rather whether or not they feel they have received value for the money spent. This is why most service companies, devoted to becoming totally customer driven have the desire to meet and exceed their customers' expectations at the root of all company activities and systems.

Quality service to a customer means courtesy, promptness, a basic sense that one's needs are being satisfied and most importantly good attitude on the part of the service provider. Customers tend to be more forgiving of personal problems in service delivery if they are treated with personal care and respect and their problems are immediately resolved. William Band (1991) has identified four kinds of 'defenses' about company service breakdowns that make customers angry. These include: complex complaint procedures; a slow grudging response to refunds; adversarial approach to dealing with customers; and, delays in making the necessary changes in services.

True customer-driven companies believe that customer

complaints are golden opportunities for the company to improve their systems, policies, procedures and services to accurately reflect customer needs and expectations. They have streamlined their complaint procedures and given front line employees authority to solve customer problems. Management has trained employees to view complaints as an opportunity to make up for poor service delivery and gain loyal customers.

Companies must have a much closer relationship with customers today. They must get behind the product or service itself to see where the customer is coming from. This involves a very high degree of customer listening. To win today, service companies must delight and astound its customers with product and service offerings that far exceed customer expectations.

More and more organizations are realizing that providing total quality service mean larger profits and the ability to have a large competitive advantage over similar industrial companies. These companies realize that customer service is not something that is done haphazardly at various times when business is slow. Quality customer service must be earned and re-earned every single day. Quality improvement programs must embrace the whole company by allocating a great deal of resources to reflect top management's commitment to delivering customer value and quality.

Companies that are obsessed with delivering legendary service

have several common philosophies. The most important and critical aspect to becoming a customer driven organization is the absolute commitment of top executives. Top executives must personally put customers first and seek new ways to learn what customers want and need. By showing that the customer drives the whole company and is the reason why the company exists, top management can inspire all employees to measure every action against those customer expectations. Top management must communicate to all employees why their job is important and how it will serve the customer.

The first step in creating a customer driven service obsessed corporate culture is to have top executives create a vision of what the company should look like (Albrecht, 1992). A service-oriented customer-focused strategy must be implemented by top management. This means 100% commitment of whatever resources are needed; time, money, manpower, reorganization, etc. They must spend a lot of time to define the service culture they want to build and to clarify the shared values they want all employees to have. It is important for executives to communicate to every employee that quality improvement is every person's job -- not the job of only the "quality specialist".

Successful service companies are shifting to a new paradigm which puts people at the center of their universe, replacing rigid hierarchies with a network structure which emphasizes interconnectedness between departments. The new paradigm states

that quality service is produced by the company but delivered by the frontline employees. Every person behind the front line worker acts to serve and support efforts to allow the front line worker to do his job well.

Senior executives must visibly and actively lead this incredibly rewarding cultural change process and realize that it is a continuous, never ending improvement journey. The vision that is formulated must inspire employees to do their best for the customer and help the employee do only the things that truly add value and meaning for the customer.

After formulating vision and strategy for exclusively focusing on the customer and communicating these strategies to all employees, executives must begin to organize the company's systems, policies and procedures around the customer. Executives must begin to slowly and carefully create a company culture that sees the customer as the starting point and listening post for everything they do. In a customer-focused culture all employees know who their customers are, know what constitutes quality service and value for them, and constantly work to deliver that quality. A service-oriented culture treats all employees as 'customer strategists' and 'quality advocates'.

Top executives obsessed with service excellence use a continuous and intensive process of educating their employees about

their customers, about quality service and their critical role in delivering superior service. Because they constantly "walk their talk", these executives have a commitment at all levels of leadership to continuous quality improvement. If necessary, these executives will constantly examine and revise every company policy, process, rule or procedure to be designed with what makes their customers satisfied and delighted.

After communicating the vital importance of meeting, satisfying and exceeding all of the company's customers (internal and external) the next step is to create a work environment which makes it easy for employees to provide quality services.

When creating this work environment the most important aspect is that management must enable front line employees to be more effective quality advocates. The company's structure is there to support the front line workers. Top and middle managers must go to any lengths to help their employees find out what their customers want and desire. Management should give them continuous feedback and inform them as to how they are doing in meeting those desires. It is critical for management to realize that employees get feedback, recognition, and appreciation for their contributions of delivering 'superior' customer service. By doing this, it inspires everyone in the company to measure every action against customer needs and to constantly strive to exceed those expectations.

A good, trusting work environment fosters independent action, wisdom, empowerment and a willingness to take risks to do things that are perceived by the customer as "wonderful" and beyond customer expectations.

The most important skill top management can teach the company employees is to listen and communicate directly to what the customer wants. This forces people to look at the company's product or service from the customer's point of view.

Successful service companies encourage their customers to talk about their problems with the company's products, services, or employees. Successful service companies do several things right all the time. They practice 'visible' management. They have customer-friendly service systems. They recruit, hire, train, and promote for service. They market 'service' to their customers and to their employees. Finally, they measure service quality and make results available to all employees.

Service quality is defined as a company's ability to perform the desired service dependably, consistently and accurately. The company is willing to provide prompt, courteous service to customers at any cost. The company's employees are knowledgeable, courteous, confident and caring enough to provide individualized attention to their customers.

In successful customer-driven companies, top management "walks their talk" all the way down to front line employees. They constantly reinforce the message that the customer is the main reason why the company exists and this is repeatedly communicated in different ways until all employees are convinced that management is very serious about quality customer service. Top executives involve managers at all levels in formulating strategies and resources needed to become a customer-driven company. According to Karl Albrecht (1992) top executives are responsible for creating and maintaining the service culture that makes putting the customer first -- the company's number one priority. These executives realize that in order to put customers first, they must understand their customers' basic needs, life situations, problems and their buying motivations.

After making sure that the company's policies are customer driven, true service leaders recruit, hire, train and promote people who are truly devoted to making each customer's "moment of truth" a positive one. When hiring front line employees, who are the company's main contact with customers it is critical for them to understand an upset customer's mind set. In these situations, the workers must stay friendly and build up trust with the customer so they can collaborate to solve the problem. Service people are the most important and critical resource that a company has in differentiating its products or services from other competitors in the industry. This is why service leaders are committed to

coaching, advising, training, managing and educating employees so they can deliver to customers the best possible service. Front line employee empowerment allows the service deliverer to act with competence and assertiveness and, to take actions which are not covered by the company's rules or procedures.

In recruiting people who are truly dedicated to providing excellent service, top management should be directly involved in the hiring process. By having top management involved it sends a clear signal that the company is serious about becoming a customer-focused business and willing to do whatever it takes to attract quality people. In training employees, management should make it clear that mistakes made in helping customers solve their problems will be treated as opportunities for individual learning and growth. Customers like to deal with service employees who have the power to act on their behalf. Front line employees should be cross trained to allow them to gain a bigger picture perspective that is needed to respond to unusual customer requests. According to Karl Albrecht (1992) service excellence is dependent on high employee self esteem. Employees possess a high sense of self-worth when they are allowed to solve problems or resolve complaints as they occur. It is very important to give the responsibility of customer satisfaction to people on the front line. However, management should be there to back up and support front line employees in case they need help. It is critical for management to realize that the success of the company depends on the competence of the front line

employees.

Front line employees must create a successful positive "moment of truth" for each customer by personally relating to the customer and solving his or her immediate problem by using common sense and a thorough knowledge of company policy. This personal contact between front line employees and customers is essential to provide a high level of quality service.

This personal contact is established when the employee makes eye contact with the customer and greets the customer with some sort of polite acknowledgement. At this point, the employee's job is to help his/her customer focus on solving a problem or need. The employee should listen as long as is necessary in order to understand the problem and convince the customer that he or she understands. At this point, employees must attempt to resolve the situation by telling the customer what is being done. It is important that the employee informs the customer that he or she is still available if there is any further problems with the product or service. In training front line employees with direct customer contact, it is important that management allows them to problem solve and to get the customer involved in identifying alternative solutions.

It cannot be emphasized enough that it is very important for front line employees to feel that they are a significant part of

the company, and feel supported by it. Too many companies are ignoring their front line employees by not giving them continuous feedback, recognition and appreciation.

In response to the lack of support and appreciation, front line employees treat the customers like their employers treat them.

Supervisors of front line employees must mobilize the necessary resources for their employees. It is very important for supervisors to be cheerleaders and coaches by encouraging and emotionally supporting employees. Instead of constant criticism and supervision, their new role is to be a leader, a mentor, and a coach.

An important factor in maintaining a corporate culture dedicated to service excellence is to have in place an award program that provides quick meaningful recognition whenever and wherever service excellence occurs. According to William Band (1991), people naturally want to take pride in their jobs and to be recognized for excelling at something. Ron Zemke (1989), believes that it is a good idea to reward outstanding service performance through the use of merit salary increases and bonuses. He also recognizes that career advancement and recognition should be based on achieving certain levels of 'going beyond' expected customer service. He also believes that instantaneous rewards for outstanding service is crucial. When pay is linked to performance,

employee motivation to work is raised and productivity is higher which results in increased job satisfaction. Whitley (1991), believes that if employees know they are expected to use their abilities to serve customers, it makes them feel that they are part of the action, which, in turn, encourages them to stay with the company. Zemke points out that great service companies often pay their employees above average wages for their industry. Outstanding service companies realize that employee recognition and award celebrations are ways to reaffirm to their employees that they are important and are critical to producing the company's quality products and services. Richard Whitley (1991), believes that creating a corporate culture that makes people feel good and supports their pursuit of customer satisfaction, creates a more competitive edge.

According to Karl Albrecht (1992) successful service companies use quality service "action teams" to prepare and train employees to attack problem areas by identifying and analyzing problems and develop solutions. These solutions are presented to top management for implementation. Successful service companies realize that skills training for all employees is critical for total commitment to service excellence (Albrecht, 1992).

Each training session has to be designed to improve customer service delivery and help each individual employee grow as a person.

For upper management, service-quality training needs to concentrate on the importance of customer orientation and must support the service-quality efforts of everyone in the company (Albrecht, 1992).

Middle management's training must redefine their roles as supporter and coach, rather than supervisor. Training should define the process of service leadership, using service quality improvement tools and planning strategies (Albrecht, 1992).

Front line employee training should teach each worker how to have better customer contact skills which includes: listening, problem solving, complaint handling and stress management. Every level of training must teach employees to think about customers' 'needs' first (Albrecht, 1992).

After management hires and trains their employees to be service oriented, they must continually promote service throughout the company and to their customers. Being a customer driven company requires executives that are fanatics about service quality and are 100% committed for the long haul. They know that constant support, energy, and attention on service quality is critical in order to become a company known for its legendary service and extraordinary customer focus.

Management must try to improve areas of extreme customer

dissatisfaction and its systems which cause a high amount of employee frustration. Successful companies ask their customers and employees to participate in service improvement programs (Albrecht, 1992). By allowing customers and employees to participate in these improvement programs, it helps them to see progress and to feel like they have really contributed.

Successful service companies also have systems and policies which allow for immediate service recovery if something should go wrong for the customer (Zemke, 1989). After a breakdown in service, service recovery demands an immediate acknowledgement of the mistake (Zemke, 1989). It is important that the company express compassion for the customer's problem so that he or she feels that they have been listened to and cared about. Successful service leaders realize that when there is a breakdown in service, it becomes necessary to first treat the person rather than the problem. Companies must make a gesture that clearly says to the customer; "We made a mistake and we really feel terrible about it, we would like the chance to make it up to you" (Zemke, 1989). Follow-up after service recovery is critical because it serves to affirm the company's concern about the customer's experience.

The final step a successful service organization must follow is the constant measurement of service quality according to their internal (employees) customers, and external customers. Leading service companies use a service quality audit to determine customer

friendliness towards the company's systems and policies, the competence and customer focus of the front line service people, the level of support provided by the company's service leaders, and the extent of employee empowerment (Albrecht, 1992).

Companies also give a service culture audit to employees to find out their perceptions of service quality provided to the customer, the internal effectiveness of the company, areas that need improvement, the quality of work life, the chances for the success of the quality program, and finally, top executive commitment to make the service quality effort succeed.

Successful service companies measure everything that tells them what kind of job they are doing for the customer (Whitley, 1991). They also collect hard data that shows how much the company is losing because employees do not take the time to care about the customers. Whitley believes that successful service leaders measure customer satisfaction daily and they post the results where every employee can see them.

Service companies should be measuring their successes and failures from the customer's point of view. They should know why they are measuring customer satisfaction data. Most importantly, service leaders let the customers tell the company which end results to measure (Whitley, 1991). They constantly ask how well their company and its competitors are doing. These service

companies review their service quality characteristics at least once a year, and they insist that their employees take this customer data very seriously. Service leaders realize that good customer data measurement, effectively communicated and used, helps employees serve their customers better. Service leaders also recognize that employees must be involved in developing customer satisfaction measures so it will be more relevant to their day-to-day jobs (Band, 1991). Research instruments should be designed so that the company can take action to implement the changes based on the results. Qualitative and quantitative data research instruments should be gathered. Customer satisfaction research should include a general evaluation of service quality and a specific evaluation of service attributes (Band, 1991). The 'customer dissatisfaction' part of the research should focus on the types and frequency of customer problems to determine their impact on customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Band, 1991). Service leaders should also make sure that follow up procedures are built into the survey to make sure that the complaint or comment is given to the right person to be dealt with as soon as possible. Service leaders use this valuable information to establish priorities for corrective action.

William Band identifies eight steps for service companies to measure customer satisfaction. The first step is to determine what customer satisfaction issues need to be resolved. Then companies must set objectives to specify how the information collected, will

resolve the problems. Companies should carry out exploratory research through focus groups or personal interviews. The next step is to decide how the information should be collected, from whom it should be collected, the size of the survey, and how frequently the information should be collected. Then the company collects and processes and analyzes the data. After interpreting and evaluating the information, the company should apply the results by making the necessary changes in the products, services, or systems of the company. Leaders in service excellence realize that front line employees have a greater appreciation of customer problems and requirements than does top management. They can provide top management with a valuable perspective on customer happiness. Customer satisfaction feedback should be used as a basis for employee training programs (Band, 1991). Leaders in service excellence should administer these formal surveys every sixty to ninety days and supplement them with informal monthly surveys. They should also make sure that a feedback loop is in place that links customer satisfaction to manager and employee performance appraisals.

Quality customer service is late in coming to the gaming industry. Traditionally, the blackjack dealer's work environment has involved a routinization of functions, which is typically a production line approach (Frey, 1987). Casino management feels that the routinization of the dealer's job contributes to maintaining the house percentage. Blackjack dealing has been

regarded as a job with low skill requirements, little chance of career advancement, little reward for seniority, and high turnover.

In addition to little job security, mistrust and mutual suspicion between dealers and management have been rampant in the casino industry. Every casino manager has been afraid that his own employees will cheat at the casino's expense. Casino management has fought for the right to hire or fire at will without giving the dealer notice or reason (Frey, 1987). Management feels that this is necessary to keep the games honest. This brings up a paradox of trust within the industry because most dealers are hired on the basis of personal contacts and friendships with the pit boss, floor manager, or shift boss. This newly hired dealer is "trusted" by management more than a stranger coming off the street. Management then scrutinizes dealers and looks for cheating (Frey, 1987).

James Frey and Donald Cairns, two professors at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, did a survey during 1986-87 that revealed 64% of the dealers questioned were hired because they knew the right person. However, when key personnel leave or are fired, it is not unusual for a number of dealers to get a pink slip because of "change of personnel".

In most service industries job security, experience, and loyalty are normal factors that are taken for granted in an employee's work environment, yet they are often irrelevant in

entering the gaming industry. Traditionally, blackjack dealers have been controlled by the threat of firing, and restricted communication between the players and themselves. They also have been controlled by closed circuit television monitors watching all the table games on a continuous basis. Because of these factors just described it can justifiably be argued that the way casino management treats its employees is the way they treat the casino's customers (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). Repetitiveness coupled with close supervision and low job security and low wages all contribute to stress.

When blackjack dealers feel bored with their jobs and feel that they have little opportunity to use their minds to make decisions, there is no motivation to care about the quality of the customer's playing experience. This low personal commitment to the job other than showing up for work can cause many problems in controlling and motivating the dealers.

One of the issues that has been of the greatest concern for the dealers is job security. The managerial atmosphere of distrust, heavy reliance on personal loyalty, autocratic style of decision making and excess labor supply all combine to work against job security (Frey, 1986).

For the past few years there has been an overabundance of trained dealers. There is an average annual demand for 1400

dealers and there are 2300 dealers available. Since there is such a large labor pool, casino management has not been greatly concerned with the high rate of turnover.

Recently, dealers have started to think about organizing a union. However, delaying tactics by casino management combined with the belief that unions are corrupt, stalled that move. Employees that were found to have been involved in any union activity were immediately terminated. Unions in Las Vegas have been having problems because of declining memberships. Their powerful public image has been declining. They are not as powerful in the casino gaming industry as they once were (Frey, 1987).

Another major concern for blackjack dealers are low wages for repetitive, boring work. In the past, dealers had always depended on tips to supplement their meager minimum wage paychecks. Their paychecks are used primarily to cover their health insurance and social security benefits.

Dealer tips have decreased because of several factors. Corporate takeovers of casino properties have resulted in the decline of complimentary room, food and beverage to the high rollers. These junkets of high rollers are occurring less frequently. Now casinos are directing their marketing efforts toward the recreational and middle income gambler and less to the high rollers who are big tippers. With fewer high rollers, the

dealer's average tip income has declined. As a result the casino profit margins have decreased which leaves a smaller amount available for wage and benefit increases (Frey, 1986). This decline of high rollers along with IRS involvement in reporting tips as income has cut drastically into dealers' disposable income.

Becoming a blackjack dealer continues to draw people because of the low skill and educational requirements. Some casinos are beginning to recognize the stress and burnout dealers constantly confront by providing more comfortable lounges, more breaks and counseling. However, casino management has a long way to go to make their work environment better. This will be discussed further in the next two chapters.

Being a blackjack dealer is a low level job that attracts people who may not necessarily be looking for personal growth. These people feel that if the pay is good and the job is clearly outlined, they can endure less than ideal working conditions.

Casino management has allowed dealers to have an aloof, unfriendly attitude in response to the abuse they have to put up with to avoid losing players. Management has felt that this was the price casinos had to pay to keep the table action moving. However, today it is no longer a seller's market because the gaming player has many options available to him that were not available five or ten years ago (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). New casino

properties like the MGM Grand, Treasure Island and the Luxor properties are coming on line and it will be a long time before new customers are found for their products. These new casinos will be siphoning off customers from the other casinos.

Casino customers are getting wiser. They know that all casinos offer the same gaming products; the same table games with the same odds. All casinos must conform to the same strict government rules and regulations. A major differentiation between casinos must be service excellence in all aspects of the hotel and gaming experience for the customer. Players will not be influenced by exterior, innovative gimmicks such as exploding volcanos or tropical rain forests. Outstanding customer service will be required to maintain casino player patronage and loyalty (Thompson, Comeau, 1992).

As in any service industry, bad service can quickly ruin the casino's bottom line. Players receiving rude treatment are very likely to tell their horror stories to their friends and anyone else within earshot. These negative stories are more likely to be very persuasive and spread very quickly.

There are many reasons why casinos should pay extra attention to existing and repeat players. It costs more money to get a new player in the door than it does to keep an old one. Once the players know the reputation of the casino property's dealers and

management, all the fancy tricks and expensive advertising will not bring him back if the service is poor.

The only aspect that a player cares about is how well he is treated in every part of the casino. To be successful, casinos need to go beyond expected service and provide legendary service all the time to every customer.

Successful casino executives inform all casino employees, at all levels, how critical it is to provide consistently high levels of customer service. Management must be able to recognize that what each individual dealer, change person, slot manager or floor manager does in terms of customer service affects service delivery throughout the casino and hotel. Casinos must realize that the customer is the reason the casino is in business. Too often, casino executives believe that customers are numbers on the casino's profit and loss statements. They must remember that customers are people and casinos must treat them the way they wish to be treated if they were the customers.

Jan Carlzon's "Moments of Truth" happens each time a customer meets up with a representative of the relevant industry. It can be directly applied to the casino industry. A player's 'moment of truth' occurs when he comes face-to-face with casino employees. This "moment of truth" is critical to the casino because it impacts the player's decision on whether or not to continue playing. When

visiting the casino, customers experience many "moments of truth", starting with the valet parking attendant, cashing out at the casino cage, or checking out at the end of the stay.

Providing quality customer service means that casino management should have a friendly and courteous employee available to answer customer questions about the location of table games and rules. A player is also observant about the kind of greeting he or she receives as she sits down at the blackjack table. How the player is treated by the dealer, the pit manager, the floor manager is also very important in the player's overall impression of the quality of service.

Management must realize that the way the casino treats its employees is the way the casino expects its employees to treat its customers. Blackjack dealers and casino floor employees provide an excellent opportunity to give the players outstanding service. All too often, in many casinos, employees ignore this opportunity.

Many casinos do not realize that players want to be entertained, appreciated, and made to feel that they are valued people. Players want to feel welcome and important in the casino yet they want the employees to respect their privacy at the same time. Players want quick, positive action taken if they experience a problem. They want and expect good service without having to ask for it (Thompson, Comeau, 1992).

Casinos executives must believe in customer service. A vision of the casino's mission statement must be communicated by the executives all the way down to floor management, blackjack dealers, all dealers and change personnel. Service excellence in the casino industry depends on the quality of the dealers and floor managers. Casino executives should find good dealers and hire them. Once hired, management should give dealers motivation and direction, and train them for success. The high turnover of dealers is the result of casino reluctance to invest in effective service training for dealers. Management believes that it is a waste of time and effort to train dealers that may leave after a short period of time. Successful casinos realize that an investment in effectively training all casino employees in the importance of customer service can motivate employees and actually reduce turnover. Effective and thorough training lets dealers know that they are a valuable and important resource for the casino.

In many casinos, blackjack dealers work in a hostile atmosphere where he or she must be friendly to the player but not talk or laugh because some players are serious gamblers that do not like talkative dealers. In doing so, floor managers could think dealers are trying to hustle tips. So, dealers feel the easiest way is to be quiet and expressionless while dealing to the players. Players must always be treated with courtesy and respect. On the other hand, dealers are not always treated with the same politeness by the players. Players can get rude and hostile especially if

they are losing large sums of money. In this type of playing environment management tries to satisfy the player's wishes in any problem or complaint against the dealer even if the dealer was extremely polite and patient with the rude player.

In many casinos, blackjack dealers are insecure about their jobs because they know that one player complaint may cause dismissal. The ability to hire and fire at will gives management total control over the dealers which they feel is necessary to permit immediate removal of dealers just suspected of cheating (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). This sense of job insecurity does not provide dealers with an incentive to promote quality service. This "bottom line" thinking is unfortunately directed towards the short term consequences of high turnover. This results in low morale among dealers and unmotivated, uncaring employees.

Most blackjack dealers in Las Vegas are still paid minimum wage. The highest pay is still around \$50 per eight hour shift or approximately \$6 an hour (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). Dealers tips can range from around \$30 a day at casinos where there are low table stakes to around \$160 a day at places like Caesars Palace or The Mirage. Day-to-day totals fluctuate widely because most casinos combine the table games into tip pools which are then distributed to the dealers (Thompson & Comeau, 1992). Management does not like dealers to hustle for tips because tip money is player money that is permanently removed from play, and the casino

cannot win this money. Dealers, on the other hand, root for the player as that will mean higher tips.

Instability of dealers' wages make the percentage of dealers who own their own homes very low. Dealers usually get paid in cash which can be more easily spent on drinking, gambling or drugs.

Casinos interested in improving customer service believe in a theory Y management style which allows dealers and casino personnel to be personally involved in the workplace. Dealer satisfaction and motivation will come when casinos provide opportunities for individual personal growth, advancement to other casino positions, added responsibility and the opportunity to be recognized for achieving outstanding performance in the dealing environment (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). So far, most casinos do not allow the dealers to meet their lower level needs of job security and good wages. Dealers are still struggling to avoid being unhappy and dissatisfied in their jobs. This atmosphere is not conducive to providing a quality level of service. Casinos must be committed to educating all levels of casino employees in all facets of customer service.

When designing a quality measurement system, it is very beneficial for management to know and understand what players like, what brings them back, and what causes them to gamble in the casino.

Smart casinos are realizing that as more gaming options are becoming available the one quality that sets them apart from others is outstanding customer service. Existing players are likely to spend ten times as much as new players. It is critical for casino executives to make them feel appreciated. These existing players are the casino's best form of advertising because they use word of mouth to let their friends know which casino to patronize and why.

A major problem in many casinos today is that management is very reluctant to use dealers for anything except their skills and abilities. Most blackjack dealers think that they are powerless. This leads to a negative impact on their technical job performance and deprives them of the ability to make a positive contribution towards improving the casino's customer service efforts. If management will allow the dealers to be involved in customer service efforts in addition to dealing "21", this can have a positive impact on their tips, and thus, contribute to an improved work environment.

Management should realize that empowerment works because dealers are the front line employees that are in a position to know if a player is unhappy with the service delivery of the casino, the hotel or both. They spend hours with the player hearing about things that went wrong with the hotel check in, the restaurant, the room or even casino personnel. The dealer is in a great position for casino management to deliver good recoveries from service

deficiencies to the player and turn the player into a loyal, repeat customer (Thompson, Comeau, 1992). Players are more loyal to casinos that admit their mistakes and promptly correct the situation or problem.

In many casinos, customer service training is "smile training". This entails an outside consultant hired by the casino to make sure that dealers and casino personnel smile more.

CHAPTER III

DATA ANALYSIS

Tabulation and Analysis of the Data

The quality of the dealer's work environment in the two casinos impacts the relationship between dealers, customers and management and may have a direct impact on the level of quality service offered to the customer. Dealer motivation also plays a major role in the relationship between management and dealers in the two casinos. How dealers feel about management and management's response is critical for improving the work environment.

The statistical program for the social sciences (SPSS) was used to tabulate the results of the two questionnaires administered to the convenience sample of sixty-six dealers on three shifts. These questionnaires were administered at two casinos in the Las Vegas area, one located on the strip, the other in downtown Las Vegas. In casino A, thirty-two dealers out of a possible 130 dealers (or 24.6%) were surveyed and in casino B, thirty-four dealers out of 106 (or 32%) were questioned.

The blackjack dealers filled out two separate questionnaires. One queried their perceptions of the basic work environment, management, job conditions and customer service. The other questionnaire had the dealers ranking the most important

motivational factors on their job.

The questionnaire concerning the dealer's work environment consisted of a series of twenty-five statements developed by the author. Dealers were asked to respond to each statement by circling numbers on a Likert Scale ranging from one (Strongly disagree) to five (Strongly agree) representing the degree in which he/she agreed or disagreed with the twenty-five statements. These statements were grouped into four factor groups in order to do a Pearson's correlation among them to measure relationships among the factors. The factors included customer service, dealers' perception of their work, environment factors, and management-dealer relationships. These twenty-five statements questioned the dealers on a variety of issues that directly affected their perception of the quality of their work environment and the quality of their relationship with management. These statements can be found in Appendix A.

The statements that represented the dealers variables included: blackjack dealing is fun, being a dealer is stressful, blackjack dealing is unrewarding, long hours involved, adequate time for breaks, great deal of friendliness, good chance for career advancement and customer service is very important.

The statements that represented the management variables included: side with dealers, management treats you fairly,

complaints addressed fairly, atmosphere of openness, mistakes tolerated, management will listen, supervisor motivates you, supervisor pays close attention, management informs you of policy change, encouragement to make suggestions, and management improve services.

The statements representing customer service variables are: customer spending money is treated well, and playing atmosphere is exciting. Environmental factor variables are: dealers put up with abuse, management provides good work environment and management should provide smoke free casinos.

The second questionnaire the dealers filled out involved ranking motivational factors, taken directly from Richard Darder's 1991 thesis entitled An Assessment of a Motivational Environment as Viewed by Dealers in the Casino Industry, published by the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, on a descending scale from the most important to the least important. This questionnaire used in this study and Darder's thesis was developed by Kenneth Kovack and Dr. Gerald Goll.

This survey was used to find out what blackjack dealers felt was most important to them in their work environment. Both questionnaires were designed to find out how dealers felt about their jobs and their working relationship with floor management. Thirty-two dealers from casino A out of 130 blackjack dealers

responded to the questionnaire, and thirty-four dealers from casino B responded to the questionnaires. 24.6% of the blackjack dealers from casino A and 32% of the dealers from casino B responded. A convenience sample of dealers from three shifts (day, swing and graveyard) from casino A was selected, and a sample from the day and swing shifts from casino B was chosen.

In using the SPSS program to analyze the results, two questionnaires were combined into one program. Sixty-six dealers responded; thirty-two from casino A and thirty-four from casino B.

Dealing blackjack is not a job that requires a high level of academic education; 61.2% had a high school education while only 35.8% had either completed college or at least two years of college. These results show that dealing is a semi-skilled occupation with little formal academic education required.

Most respondents questioned were white (70.1%). The second largest group of dealers were Asian, making up 14.9% of the respondents and blacks composed 9%. This leads to the assumption that to be a dealer, all that is really required is the technical skills of dealing and only a basic knowledge of English.

In compiling the demographic statistics, 52.2% of the dealers questioned worked the day shift (11 am to 7 pm); 35.8% worked the swing shift (7 pm - 3 am); and, 10.4% of the dealers worked the

graveyard shift (3 am-11 am). Generally, the older dealers (over 40) do not like to work the graveyard shift because they prefer to spend the time with their families and do not like the late night hours. Another reason why older dealers do not like to work the graveyard shift is that the tokens are usually smaller because the casino is less crowded during the early morning hours and the table action is a lot slower. Younger dealers (most without families) have the energy to work late.

In spite of the perceived poor working conditions, 28.4% of the sixty-six dealers strongly agreed and 25.4% agreed with the statement that being a blackjack dealer is fun. Only 4.5% of those surveyed really thought that it wasn't any fun at all.

One of the major problems in a blackjack dealer's work environment is the abuse they have to put up with from losing players. This is reflected in the fact that 22.4% and 31.3% of the dealers questioned agree and strongly agreed respectively, while only 10.4% disagreed.

Perhaps a major reason why dealers believe the job is so stressful is the fact they have to put up with abusive players. Of those questioned, 65.7% do agree that being a dealer is very stressful while 18% disagreed.

Of the sixty-six dealers questioned, a significant portion

(34.3%) strongly believe that being a blackjack dealer is unrewarding. Dealers in both casinos (16.4%) agreed with this statement. Of those questioned, 25.4% are not sure or were indifferent to the unrewarding aspects of their jobs and only 21% of the dealers disagreed.

The dealers do not seem to mind the hours involved because 38.8% of them strongly disagreed with the statement that the one thing they disliked the most about being a dealer was the long hours involved.

As far as their breaks are concerned, 22.4% of the dealers strongly agreed that management gives them enough time for breaks and 29.9% of them somewhat agreed. However, 20.8% of the dealers disagree that management allows adequate time for breaks.

Casino management can be encouraged by the fact that 26.9% and 34.3% of the dealers surveyed believe that there is a great deal of friendliness among all levels of casino employees. It is important to note that 61.2% of the dealers believe that there is a friendly attitude between casino employees. However, management should pay attention to the fact 20.9% of the dealers disagreed.

In analyzing how dealers regard customer service, 82.1% of the dealers questioned felt very strongly that customer service is an important aspect in their job.

Of the sixty-six dealer questioned, 32.8% and 46.3% believe that the playing atmosphere is friendly and exciting for the player. Along similar lines, when questioned, 50.7% of the dealers strongly agreed that the players who spend a lot of money are treated very well in their casino. Management should show some concern for the 4.5% of the dealers who strongly disagreed and 9% of those who disagreed that customers were treated well.

When questioned on whether management should make casinos non-smoking, 28.4% of the dealers strongly disagreed, 10.4% disagreed and 28.4% strongly agreed. There was also a significant percentage of dealers (28.4%) indifferent as to whether or not the casino should be non-smoking. One can suspect that the dealers most adamant about not having a smoke-free casino are probably smokers themselves. As long as there is this much controversy over the smoking issue, it probably is safe to assume that casinos will not be made non-smoking establishments any time soon.

When losing players get nasty, 23.9% of the dealers strongly agreed that management would side with them. When losing players get nasty, 20.9% of the dealers agreed somewhat that management would take their side. However, a very large 37.3% of the dealers were neutral or indifferent in believing that management would be on their side and 10.4% of the dealers disagreed.

When asked if management treats them fairly, 41.8% strongly

agreed, 23.9% agreed somewhat, 17.9% did not have an opinion, and 11.9% disagreed.

When dealers have a problem or complaint, 28.4% strongly agreed that management addresses these complaints when they arise. Of these dealers, 26.9% agreed somewhat, 23.9% were not sure, and 10.4% disagreed.

When asked, 28.4% of blackjack dealers strongly believe that management has made the effort of creating an atmosphere of open communication, however, 23.8% disagreed.

When making mistakes in counting cards or dealing, 43.3% strongly agreed with management's tolerance of mistakes, considering it a basis for learning. Of the dealers surveyed, 32.8% of them agreed somewhat and 13.4% were not sure or were indifferent. These results indicate that dealers know that if they make reasonable mistakes and learn from them and develop sharper skills, management will treat them as such.

When dealers have a problem or disagreement, 44.8% strongly agreed that management will at least listen to them when they have a problem and only 13.4% were not sure if management would listen to them.

When questioning the dealers about how well their immediate

supervisor does in motivating them, 31.3% felt strongly that their supervisors did a good job, 25.4% somewhat agreed, however, 17.9% were not sure, and 13.4% disagreed.

Of the dealers surveyed, 28.4% strongly agreed that management informs them of policy and procedure changes before they implement them; 32.8% somewhat agreed while 10.4% strongly disagreed.

Feedback on dealer performance is a critical area and 26.9% strongly agreed that management has effective measurement procedures in place. However, a large portion of the dealers (28.4%) are unsure and 22.3% disagreed.

When questioned, 31.3% agreed that management has tried to provide a good work environment for the casino employees, 23.9% strongly agreed, 28.4% were uncertain, and 7.5% strongly disagreed.

When queried about management's encouragement for dealer suggestions to improve the playing atmosphere, 22.4% strongly agreed, 29.9% agreed, 19.4% were unsure, and 14.9% strongly disagreed.

When asked about management's consistent efforts to improve services to players and employees, 26.9% strongly agreed, 38.8% agreed, and 23.9% were uncertain.

When dealers discuss suggestions with management, 28.4% strongly agreed that the supervisor pays close attention to their suggestions, 23.9% agreed, 23.9% were uncertain, and 13.4% disagreed.

A T-test for independent samples of all the items on the survey for casino A and B was done. The significance level was established at 0.05 and 0.01. The T-test was used to prove the null hypothesis that there were no differences between the two casinos void. Indeed the T-test has revealed that there are six to seven items that show there are differences between the two casinos.

In analyzing the T-value of adequate time for breaks there is a positive value of 3.89 leading to a significance level of 0.01. This is statistically significant because it establishes there is a major difference between the dealers in casino A, who have agreed that management provides adequate time for breaks, and the dealers in casino B who do not agree.

The T-value for management treats you fairly is -2.65. This indicates that dealers in casino B are more positive in their outlook towards management treating them fairly than dealers in casino A.

The significance level is $p \leq .01$ which indicates another

significant difference between dealers in casino A and casino B. Dealers in casino B agree that management treats them fairly.

The T-value for complaints addressed fairly is -2.31. Again this indicates that dealers in casino B tend to believe that management addresses their complaints more fairly than dealers in casino A. The significance level is 0.024. There is a definite difference in dealer attitudes regarding how their complaints are addressed.

The T-value for the atmosphere of openness that management provides is -3.22. The significance level is 0.002. Dealers in casino B believe that management is more open with them than dealers in casino A. The T-value signifies that there is another difference in attitude with dealers in casino B more positive about management's openness than dealers in casino A.

The T-value for management will listen is -3.61. The significance level is 0.001. Dealers in casino B feel that management will listen to them more than dealers in casino A. Again because the T-value is negative it represents dealers in casino B having a more positive view of management listening to them than dealers in casino A. There is a considerable difference in the ways dealers in casino B feel about management than dealers in casino A.

The T-value for good chance for career advancement is -3.01. The significance level is .004. Dealers in casino B believe that they have a better chance for advancing in their careers in the casino industry than dealers in casino A. Because the T-value is negative dealers in casino B feel more positive about career advancement than dealers in casino A. The T-value also signifies that there is a considerable difference in dealer responses between the two casinos.

The T-value for management's encouragement to make suggestions is -2.51. The significance value is 0.015. Because the T-value is negative dealers in casino B feel that management is more likely to encourage dealers to make suggestions to improve services than dealers in casino A. This T-value again proves that there is a difference in how dealers in both casinos feel about management's encouragement to make suggestions.

The T-value for great deal of friendliness between all levels of casino employees is -1.78. The significance level is 0.08, which means $p \leq 0.1$. This signifies a positive level of 90%. Dealers in casino B are more likely to believe that there is friendliness among all levels of casino employees than dealers in casino A.

The T-value for mistakes tolerated by management is -1.84. The significance level is .071 or $p \leq 0.10$, again signifying a

positive linear relationship of 90%. Dealers in casino B believe that management is more tolerant of mistakes that they make than dealers in casino A.

Finally the T-value for management provides dealers with a good work environment is -1.81, leading to a significance level of .075 ($p \leq 0.1$). Dealers in casino B believe that management is trying to provide them with a good work environment more than dealers in casino A.

These items described above are shown by the T-test that differences in dealer attitudes towards their work environment and their relationship with management do exist. Thus the null hypothesis that there are no differences between the two casinos is proven to be void.

Table 1 Mean Scores of Casinos "A" and B"
Main Variables {Dealer, Management, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group ^a | Mean | Standard Deviation | T-value | Significance ^b Level |
|--|--------------------|--------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Dealer</u> | | | | | |
| 1. Blackjack dealing is fun | Casino A | 3.5625 | 1.014 | -1.15 | 0.254 |
| | Casino B | 3.8824 | 1.225 | | |
| 2. Dealer is stressful | Casino A | 3.6563 | 1.359 | -0.79 | 0.432 |
| | Casino B | 3.9118 | 1.264 | | |
| 3. Blackjack dealer is unrewarding | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.391 | -0.63 | 0.531 |
| | Casino B | 3.7353 | 1.238 | | |
| 4. Long hours involved | Casino A | 2.0000 | 1.164 | -1.19 | 0.237 |
| | Casino B | 2.3824 | 1.415 | | |
| 5. Adequate time for breaks | Casino A | 4.0000 | 0.842 | 3.89 | 0.000* |
| | Casino B | 2.9118 | 1.357 | | |
| 6. Great deal of friendliness | Casino A | 3.4375 | 1.268 | -1.78 | 0.080*** |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 1.167 | | |
| 7. Good chance for career advancement | Casino A | 2.7500 | 1.320 | -3.01 | 0.004* |
| | Casino B | 3.7647 | 1.415 | | |
| 8. Customer service is very important | Casino A | 4.8125 | 0.644 | 0.54 | 0.590 |
| | Casino B | 4.7353 | 0.511 | | |
| a N _a = 32 b two tailed test * p≤0.01 ** p≤0.05 *** p≤0.1 | | | | | |
| N _b = 34 | | | | | |

Table 1(cont) Mean Scores of Casinos "A" and B"
Main Variables {Dealer, Management, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group ^a | Mean | Standard Deviation | T-value | Significance ^b Level |
|--|--------------------|--------|--------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Management</u> | | | | | |
| 1. Side with dealers | Casino A | 3.5938 | 1.266 | 0.85 | 0.401 |
| | Casino B | 3.3529 | 1.041 | | |
| 2. Management treats you fairly | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.244 | -2.65 | 0.010* |
| | Casino B | 4.2647 | 0.994 | | |
| 3. Complaints addressed fairly | Casino A | 3.4375 | 1.190 | -2.31 | 0.024** |
| | Casino B | 4.1176 | 1.200 | | |
| 4. Atmosphere of openness | Casino A | 2.9688 | 1.402 | -3.22 | 0.002* |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 1.114 | | |
| 5. Mistakes tolerated | Casino A | 3.8750 | 1.100 | -1.84 | 0.071*** |
| | Casino B | 4.3235 | 0.878 | | |
| 6. Management will listen | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.344 | -3.61 | 0.001* |
| | Casino B | 4.5294 | 0.861 | | |
| 7. Supervisor motivates you | Casino A | 3.3438 | 1.516 | -1.65 | 0.104*** |
| | Casino B | 3.8824 | 1.122 | | |
| 8. Supervisor pays close attention | Casino A | 3.3750 | 1.431 | -0.76 | 0.450 |
| | Casino B | 3.6176 | 1.155 | | |
| 9. Management informs you of policy change | Casino A | 3.4063 | 1.434 | -1.23 | 0.224 |
| | Casino B | 3.7941 | 1.122 | | |
| 10. Encouragement to make suggestions | Casino A | 2.9688 | 1.356 | -2.51 | 0.015** |
| | Casino B | 3.7941 | 1.321 | | |
| 11. Management improve services | Casino A | 3.6563 | 1.153 | -1.27 | 0.207 |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 0.834 | | |
| a N _a = 32 b two tailed test | | | | | |
| N _b = 34 | | | | | |
| | | | | ** p≤0.05 | *** p≤0.1 |

Table 1 (cont) Mean Scores of Casinos "A" and B"
Main Variables {Dealer, Management, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group ^a | Mean | Standard Deviation | T-value | Significance ^b Level |
|---|--------------------|--------|--------------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| <u>Customer Service</u> | | | | | |
| 1. Customer spending money treated well | Casino A | 4.0625 | 1.190 | -0.48 | 0.632 |
| | Casino B | 4.2059 | 1.225 | | |
| 2. Playing atmosphere is exciting | Casino A | 4.1875 | 0.780 | -0.50 | 0.619 |
| | Casino B | 4.2941 | 0.938 | | |
| <u>Environment</u> | | | | | |
| 1. Put up with abuse | Casino A | 3.5938 | 1.411 | 0.37 | 0.712 |
| | Casino B | 3.4706 | 1.285 | | |
| 2. Mngt. provides good work environment | Casino A | 3.3125 | 1.281 | -1.81 | 0.075 *** |
| | Casino B | 3.8235 | 0.999 | | |
| 3. Smoke free casino | Casino A | 2.7188 | 1.550 | -1.16 | 0.252 |
| | Casino B | 3.1765 | 1.660 | | |
| a N _a = 32 b two tailed * p≤0.01 ** p≤0.05 *** p≤0.1 | | | | | |
| N _b = 34 test | | | | | |

In analyzing the means for each of these four factor groups by casino, discussion will center around the high and low means for items on the survey by casino.

For casino A the item that had the highest mean was the statement that customer service is very important in your job. This statement revealed that the mean for dealers in casino A was 4.81. This can be interpreted as that most of the blackjack dealers surveyed from casino A strongly agree that customer service is a very important aspect in their jobs.

Most blackjack dealers in casino A agree that the playing atmosphere in their casino is exciting because the mean was 4.18. Along similar lines dealers in casino A agreed that customers who spend large amount of money at the tables are treated well because the mean was still high at 4.06.

In regards to the dealer variables most blackjack dealers in casino A agree that management has allowed them adequate time for breaks because the mean is 4.00.

For casino A the item that had the lowest mean was a management variable of dealers disliking the long hours involved. This item had the lowest mean of 2.00. Dealers in casino A disagreed with this statement.

One of the environmental variables had the next lowest mean of 2.71 for the dealers in casino A. Dealers in casino A generally disagreed that management should make casinos smoke free.

Dealers in casino A also disagreed with the statement that management provided them with a good chance for career advancement because the mean is 2.75.

With respect to management variables dealers in casino A do not agree that management provides an atmosphere of openness because the mean is rather low at 2.96. Dealers in casino A also do not agree that management gives them enough encouragement to make suggestions because the mean is only 2.96.

For casino B the item that had the highest mean for the dealers was the statement that customer service is very important in their job with a mean of 4.73.

Dealers in casino B agreed that management would listen to their problems with a total mean of 4.52. Dealers also believed that mistakes were tolerated by management more as long as they were used as a basis for learning because the mean was 4.32.

Dealers in casino B also agree that the playing atmosphere in their casino is exciting because the mean is 4.29. Most dealers in casino B believe that management treats them fairly because the

mean is 4.26.

Dealers in casino B agree that customers who spend large amounts of money in their casino are treated well by management which the mean of 4.20 shows.

Dealers in casino B also agree that they feel their complaints are addressed fairly by management revealed by the mean of 4.11.

However dealers in casino B disagree with the statement that management allows them adequate time for breaks revealed by the low mean of 2.91.

The lowest mean of 2.38 for the dealers in casino B reflects their disagreement with the statement that they dislike the long hours involved in being a blackjack dealer.

Table 2 General Results of Blackjack Dealers
Perceptions of their work {Management, Dealer, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group^a | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|--|--------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Management</u> | | | |
| 1. Side with dealers | Casino A | 3.5938 | 1.266 |
| | Casino B | 3.3529 | 1.041 |
| 2. Management treats you fairly | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.244 |
| | Casino B | 4.2647 | 0.994 |
| 3. Complaints addressed fairly | Casino A | 3.4375 | 1.190 |
| | Casino B | 4.1176 | 1.200 |
| 4. Atmosphere of openness | Casino A | 2.9688 | 1.402 |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 1.114 |
| 5. Mistakes tolerated | Casino A | 3.8750 | 1.100 |
| | Casino B | 4.3235 | 0.878 |
| 6. Management will listen | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.344 |
| | Casino B | 4.5294 | 0.861 |
| 7. Supervisor motivates you | Casino A | 3.3438 | 1.516 |
| | Casino B | 3.8824 | 1.122 |
| 8. Supervisor pays close attention | Casino A | 3.3750 | 1.431 |
| | Casino B | 3.6176 | 1.155 |
| 9. Management informs you of policy change | Casino A | 3.4063 | 1.434 |
| | Casino B | 3.7941 | 1.122 |
| 10. Encouragement to make suggestions | Casino A | 2.9688 | 1.356 |
| | Casino B | 3.7941 | 1.321 |
| 11. Management improve services | Casino A | 3.6563 | 1.153 |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 0.834 |

a N_a = 32
N_b = 34

Table 2 (cont) General Results of Blackjack Dealers
Perceptions of their work {Management, Dealer, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group ^a | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| <u>Dealer</u> | | | |
| 1. Blackjack dealing is fun | Casino A | 3.5625 | 1.014 |
| | Casino B | 3.8824 | 1.225 |
| 2. Dealer is stressful | Casino A | 3.6563 | 1.359 |
| | Casino B | 3.9118 | 1.264 |
| 3. Blackjack dealer is unrewarding | Casino A | 3.5313 | 1.391 |
| | Casino B | 3.7353 | 1.238 |
| 4. Long hours involved | Casino A | 2.0000 | 1.164 |
| | Casino B | 2.3824 | 1.415 |
| 5. Adequate time for breaks | Casino A | 4.0000 | 0.842 |
| | Casino B | 2.9118 | 1.357 |
| 6. Great deal of friendliness | Casino A | 3.4375 | 1.268 |
| | Casino B | 3.9706 | 1.167 |
| 7. Good chance for career advancement | Casino A | 2.7500 | 1.320 |
| | Casino B | 3.7647 | 1.415 |
| 8. Customer service is very important | Casino A | 4.8125 | 0.644 |
| | Casino B | 4.7353 | 0.511 |

^a N_a = 32

N_b = 34

Table 2 (cont) General Results of Blackjack Dealers
Perceptions of their work {Management, Dealer, Customer, & Environment}

| Factor/Item | Group ^a | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|--------------------|--------|--------------------|
| <u>Customer Service</u> | | | |
| 1. Customer spending money treated well | Casino A | 4.0625 | 1.190 |
| | Casino B | 4.2059 | 1.225 |
| 2. Playing atmosphere is exciting | Casino A | 4.1875 | 0.780 |
| | Casino B | 4.2941 | 0.938 |
| <u>Environment</u> | | | |
| 1. Put up with abuse | Casino A | 3.5938 | 1.411 |
| | Casino B | 3.4706 | 1.285 |
| 2. Mngt. provides good work environment | Casino A | 3.3125 | 1.281 |
| | Casino B | 3.8235 | 0.999 |
| 3. Smoke free casino | Casino A | 2.7188 | 1.550 |
| | Casino B | 3.1765 | 1.660 |

a N_a = 32

N_b = 34

Results of Work Environment

In analyzing the results of the questionnaires, twenty-five variables related to work environment were combined into four factor groups: customer service, work environment, dealer perception, and management relationship. These four factor groups were used to analyze and report the means between the dealers of the two casinos. For the entire group of dealers that were surveyed, the means of whether dealers felt good about their relationship with management was 3.70. This means that in the two casinos, dealers felt a little more positive about management than normal. Neither group felt strongly that they had a great relationship with management. However, they did not feel that their relationship was really poor. With work by both management and dealers in the two casinos, this relationship can be improved even more. For casino A the mean of the dealers surveyed was 3.42 which was slightly above average. For casino B, the mean was 3.96. In casino B most of the dealers agreed that they had a good relationship with management.

In analyzing how the dealers perceived their jobs, the means for dealers in both casinos was 3.56. This shows that dealers in both casinos viewed their jobs a little more positively than average dealers. The means for dealers in Casino A was 3.46. Dealers in Casino A viewed their jobs neither very positively or negatively. As a whole, dealers at Casino A were neutral with a slightly positive outlook towards their jobs. The means for

dealers at Casino B was 3.66. Dealers in Casino B had a slightly more positive outlook than dealers at Casino A yet, they were not overly optimistic or pessimistic in their perceptions about their jobs.

In reporting the means of the dealers perception of the importance of good customer service in both casinos, the mean was 4.18. Dealers from both casinos agreed that customer service was very important in providing an exciting playing atmosphere. The means in Casino A was 4.12. Casino A dealers agreed that good customer service is an important focus for the casino. The means at Casino B for the customer service factors was 4.25 which is slightly higher than Casino A's. Again, since there is little difference between the means of the two casinos, these factors aren't statistically significant (Table 3).

In reporting on whether the dealers from both casinos agreed that their work environment was good, the means for the two casinos is 3.35. Dealers at both casinos were neither overly positive or negative about their work environment. The dealers were mostly neutral about their agreement on how good they perceived their work environment was. The means for dealers at Casino A was 3.20. Dealers at Casino A neither agreed or disagreed with their perceptions of a good work environment. The means for dealers in Casino B were slightly higher at 3.49. These results indicate that casino management has a way to go in trying to improve the dealer's

work environment.

A Pearson's Correlation of the Coefficients was done between these four factor groups to measure the strength of the linear relationships. When analyzing the relationships between management and dealers, the significance level is 99% positive.

The Pearson's correlation was used to study any significant relationship found between any two of the variable groups which might explain some of the results of the T-test.

In analyzing the relationships between management and dealers the significance level is 99% positive. This means that there is a definite positive correlation between management and dealers. This correlation impacts how the dealer feels about his job.

The Pearson's Coefficient also reveals that the significance level between the relationship between management and customers has a significance level of 95%. Again a positive correlation exists between management and the customer. The customer will be happy to play at casinos where management makes the extra effort to maintain cordial and courteous relations with them.

The Pearson Coefficient most importantly shows a significance level of 99% when analyzing the linear relationship between dealers and their work environment. This pilot study was undertaken to see

if a direct, correlation could be found between dealers perception of their work environment and their relationship with management. Finally the coefficient reveals that a 95% positive significance level exists between customer service and the casino environment.

Table 3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficients
Amongst Main Variables {Management, Dealer, Customer, & Environment}

| | Management | Dealer | Customer | Environment |
|--------------------|------------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Management | 1.000 | 0.5391* | 0.2939** | 0.1124 |
| Dealer | | 1.0000 | 0.1759 | 0.3239* |
| Customer | | | 1.0000 | 0.2625** |
| Environment | | | | 1.0000 |

* Significance Level of .01

** Significance Level of .05

Comparison of Dealer Attitudes

This pilot study is intended to see if there are any major differences of blackjack dealers attitudes towards their work environment over time. The ten motivational factors described by Richard Darder were developed by Kenneth Kovack and Dr. Gerald Goll.

The ten motivational factors were divided into two groups; hygiene variables and motivational variables (see Table 4). Hygiene variables involve how the dealers feel about work related factors such as good wages and job security. Motivational variables involve factors dealers need to be able to enjoy work and work up to their full potential.

In analyzing the results of this study it is apparent that both casino A and B have ranked good wages the second most important factor in their jobs. This is a change from Darder's survey where both casinos ranked it the most important factors in their jobs.

Dealers in casino A are clearly not as concerned about job security as those dealers in casino B because they ranked job security as the third most important factor in their jobs while dealers in casino B ranked it as the most important factor. Darder's results showed that both casino A and B ranked it the second most important factor.

The most important factor for dealers in casino A was good working conditions. Dealers in casino B ranked good working conditions as the third most important factor in their work. Results from dealers in casino A have increased the importance of good working conditions as compared to the results from Darder's survey. In Darder's survey both casino A and B ranked good working conditions as the third most important factor.

Employer loyalty to employees was not a very important factor for dealers in both casino A and B. Dealers in casino A ranked it sixth, and dealers in casino B ranked it seventh. Results from Darder's survey also indicate that dealers from casino A and B did not believe it was very important to them, ranking it sixth and fifth respectively.

Tactful discipline for dealers in casino A was the next least most important factor dealers considered important in their jobs. Dealers in casino A and B from Darder's survey also considered tactful discipline not very important, ranking it eighth and seventh respectively.

Dealers in casino A ranked sympathetic help with personal problems as the least most important factor in their jobs. Dealers in casino B ranked help with personal problems as the next to least important factor in their jobs. Darder's results are very similar as both casinos also ranked it the next to least important

motivational factor. From these results one can assume that sympathetic understanding with personal problems is not a hygiene factor that dealers want in their jobs.

In analyzing the motivational factors for full appreciation of work done dealers in both casino A and B have ranked this as the fourth most important factor in their jobs. This has revealed no change since Darder's survey as both dealers from casino A and B in his survey also ranked it fourth.

Dealers in casino A do not rank promotion and growth within the company as very important, ranking it eighth. This is because dealers in casino A have a negative view towards management's encouragement of career advancement in the casino. Dealers in casino B rank promotion and growth within the company as the sixth most important factor in their jobs. The results from Darder's survey indicate that the dealers' attitudes are opposite with dealers in casino A ranking it fifth, and dealers in casino B ranking it eighth.

Both dealers in casino A and B believe that interesting work is important to them ranking it the fifth most important factor in job satisfaction and motivation. In comparison with casino A and B from Darder's survey where dealers ranked it seventh and sixth respectively interesting work has become more important for dealers' work satisfaction.

The last motivational variable, a feeling of being in on things was ranked seventh by dealers in casino A and the least important factor for dealers in casino B. It appears that dealers in casino A would not mind having some knowledge of important decisions made by casino management. Darder's survey revealed that dealers in both casino A and B considered this the least important factor in their jobs.

Table 4 Comparison of Dealer Attitudes
Among Main Variables {Management, Dealer, Customer, & Environment}

| | Current Survey Results | | | Darder's Results 1992 | | |
|---|------------------------|------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Casino A | Mean | Casino B | Casino A | Casino B | Casino C |
| <u>Hygiene Variables</u> | | | | | | |
| Good wages | 2 | 3.2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Job security | 3 | 4.0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Good working conditions | 1 | 3.0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Personal loyalty to employees | 6 | 6.1 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Tactful discipline | 9 | 9.5 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 8 |
| Sympathetic help with personal problems | 10 | 10.0 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 10 |
| <u>Motivational Variables</u> | | | | | | |
| Full appreciation of work done | 4 | 4.7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Promotion & growth within company | 8 | 7.9 | 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 |
| Interesting work | 5 | 5.8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Feeling of being in on things | 7 | 7.3 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 |

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Blackjack dealers' work environment affects their perception of the relationship with management. Their perception of their work environment can have a direct impact on the level of quality service given to players. If dealers do not feel that they are working in a pleasant environment, they are unlikely to make the effort to be friendly to customers. The way casino management treats its employees will in turn reflect the way employees treat customers.

The traditional model of service management is not directly applicable to the casino industry for a number of reasons. The first, is the excess of supply over demand. There are too many dealers being trained. If casino management experiences a high rate of turnover, casino management tends to be unconcerned because they know it will not be difficult to hire other dealers to replace them. The second reason is that dealing blackjack is considered a semi-skilled occupation with little formal academic education required. Of the dealers questioned, 61.2% had only a high school education, while only 35.8% had completed college or at least obtained an associates degree. Blackjack dealers are only concerned with satisfying lower level basic needs such as: job security, good wages, and appreciation for the work they are doing.

In this study casino management will not pay the dealers more than minimum wage because they feel that dealers do not have the academic background to warrant it. They feel dealers can make enough money in tips that they receive each day. The third reason that the model is not applicable is the large amounts of money the dealers handle which makes cheating and stealing a real issue. Thus management constantly monitors dealers to see if they are honest and this adds a strain to the management/employee relationship.

The methodology of this study examined the internal strategies of the casino work environment and management. The questionnaires distributed to the dealers were analyzed to determine how the dealers from two casinos felt about their work environment, what motivational factors were important to them, and whether the quality of their work environment had an correlation on their perception of their relationship with management.

Limitations

Prior permission to have the dealers participate in this study was necessary from each casino operations manager. Confidentiality and anonymity was extended. Out of six casinos contacted, only two casinos agreed to take part in this pilot study. Both casinos allowed the survey instrument to be personally distributed and administered. Casinos in this study are referred to as casino A

and casino B.

The influence of the casino shift boss on the motivational environment of each shift is recognized. Due to the limited size of the sample, the shift boss' influence is not addressed in this project. This pilot study addresses the floor manager's relationship with the blackjack dealers. Further research studies showing the impact of each shift boss on dealers' motivation is suggested.

This study found that dealers in both casinos were still concerned about good wages, job security, appreciation for work done, and good working conditions. Dealers are mainly concerned with satisfying lower hygiene level needs. Dealers do not make as much money as they used to because of the strict IRS regulations on reporting their tips as income. Also, there are not as many high rollers playing for high stakes as there used to be. Casinos are now focusing their marketing attempts on the middle class American leisure market. Recreational gamblers are not usually big tippers, so dealers try to hustle their tips which is frowned upon by management. Most casinos pool their dealers' tokens which means that in most cases, dealers do not get to keep individual tips that were bet by their players. Each dealer receives his/her share of tips twenty-four hours after his/her shift. If it was a slow day, tips could be as little as \$30 for eight hours. Much of their paycheck goes towards the federal taxes, health insurance, and

social security benefits with little remaining for living expenses.

Dealers are still very concerned about job security. Over 50% of the dealers surveyed ranked it in the top two most important motivational factors. Especially in the sluggish economy it does not help that management is watching them for the first sign of rudeness to a customer or the first big mistake they make. Dealers are aware of the high turnover rate and the excess labor supply. This makes them especially nervous.

Dealers in both casinos seem to be concerned with the quality of their work environment. They feel that their jobs are stressful. Management must make an attempt to be more sympathetic and give them more time on breaks and better facilities.

The reason they feel their jobs are stressful stems from abuse from customers who are losing. A majority of the dealers also believe that being a blackjack dealer is unrewarding much of the time. This feeling stems from their desire to be appreciated for the work they do. Dealers feel that management does not recognize how well they perform their job. They want floor managers and pit bosses to praise them, even if it is just to say "good job, Tony. It looks like the house is doing pretty good at your table...".

Blackjack dealers do not seem to mind the hours they work. They do prefer the day and swing shifts because that is where the

opportunity to earn big tips is the greatest. Casinos tend to be crowded from around 1 pm until midnight. The graveyard shift is the least crowded, thus, the amount of the dealers tokens is smaller than the other shifts.

On the positive side, 61.8% of the dealers from both casinos, believe that there is a great deal of friendliness and camaraderie between most levels of casino employees. This attitude of friendliness between dealers, casino change people, and floor managers help the dealers cope with the stressful atmosphere they face from players who are losing, and from management's looking for the slightest rule infraction. Over 82% of the dealers from both casinos realize that customer service is a very important part of their jobs. Dealers want the players to enjoy their playing experience. When questioned, 79% of the dealers believe their casinos provide an exciting, entertaining experience for the players.

Dealers from both casinos believe they have a good relationship with management. This is reinforced by the fact that 65.7% of the dealers agree that management treats them fairly. Dealers also agree that in most instances their complaints and problems are addressed fairly by management. Dealers also believe that management attempts to create an atmosphere of openness by creating two-way communication channels to facilitate the sharing of information.

Over 76% of the dealers agree that management has become more tolerant of mistakes made by dealers as long as they use these mistakes as a basis for improving their technical skills. Over half of the dealers in both casinos believe that management will listen to any problems or concerns they have. Dealers also agree that management attempts to inform them of policy changes before these changes are actually implemented. All of these positive factors point out that the dealers in the two casinos believe that management is genuinely making an effort to maintain a good relationship with them. Over half of the dealers also agreed that management encouraged them to make suggestions that would improve the playing atmosphere.

Dealers in the casino environment have few opportunities for advancement or a sense of achievement. This can contribute to the dealers' negative feelings about their work environment. Dealers have not been given the chance to set individual performance goals. Since they do not have goals, the only chance for dealers to have a sense of self achievement is to receive a raise in pay by management or to receive good tips from customers. This gives them a feeling of being appreciated.

Recognition and positive feedback from management are important motivational factors for the dealers. However, recognition and feedback are all too rare or inconsistently given to dealers. What one floor manager may consider excellent dealer

behavior, another may perceive as totally incorrect and inappropriate which leads to negative feedback. This conflicting message to dealers leads them to cease putting out the voluntary extra effort to satisfy customers for fear of punishment because of management's inconsistency.

The study of blackjack dealers from the two casinos revealed that dealers are very concerned about the quality of their work environment. Dealers are mainly concerned with satisfying their lower level basic factors of job security, good wages and good working conditions.

Suggestions

To improve dealers' work environment and the quality of the casino's customer service efforts, management must take the time and effort to learn all about the dealers under his or her supervision. It is very important to get to know each dealer on the shift. In discussing problems with individual dealers, casino floor managers should focus as much as possible on the problem and communicate that it is the behavior that is unacceptable-- not the dealer (i.e., the game is being dealt in a sloppy manner, or the game is being dealt too slowly). The floor manager should then describe what happens as a result of the occurrence of the problem. Casino floor managers should emphasize to the dealer how the problem is affecting the smooth operation of the pit and not criticize the dealer personally. He must get the dealer to offer

possible solutions to the problem and get the commitment to change.

The floor manager's main responsibility is to encourage dealers to work harder by making them feel better about themselves and their job responsibilities. A supportive casino floor manager shows appreciation and respect for the dealer by giving an encouraging word or "thank you". By doing this, the casino floor manager allows employees to be open to new attitudes, skills, and knowledge. Certainly, harsh personal criticism of a dealer's personal abilities does not motivate the dealer. The supervisor should never criticize the dealer-- only the dealer's behavior. Effective motivation means the consistent use of praise and recognition.

Management must continue to try and improve dealers' overall work environment. By doing this, management shows to dealers that they realize the stresses of dealing and that they care enough about their employees to improve the environment.

It is also very important for floor managers to let dealers know that they will be there to defend them against verbal abuse from players, and that kind of behavior is unacceptable. Floor managers must buffer dealers from verbal abuse by intervening quickly when it appears the players are making very nasty comments to the dealers. Casino management must try to understand the amount of stress that dealers face and allow them longer times away

from the tables more frequently. They should also try and create a more pleasant dealer break room where they can go and unwind.

Casino management should examine the way they measure individual dealer performance and develop objective rather than subjective measures to evaluate performance. Management must make the effort to communicate to dealers that they will be treated fairly when making mistakes or when implementing some form of discipline.

Casino management can effectively measure a dealer's performance by focusing on their accuracy in handling money, chips or tokens, and other factors. It is important that management identifies some measurement that impacts a clearly defined goal, and decide on action that is needed to improve that goal (Thompson & Comeau, 1992). Dealers can also be given performance appraisals based on their level of quality service they provide to their players. Management should recognize and praise dealers when they greet players and customers properly and when they properly resolve player problems and complaints. Player comment cards can be used by management to track dealer group performance.

Excellence in dealer service performance can be rewarded with cash bonuses, time off with pay, or instant recognition. Dealers should be allowed to establish their own personal high performance goals. Floor managers must recognize and praise dealers when they

have achieved their own personal goals. Another option is for management to recognize and reward dealers for streaks without mistakes as defined by the dealers themselves. Floor managers must allow dealers and casino personnel to participate in designing the contests and scorekeeping systems to allow them to remain motivated to perform well in their jobs (Thompson & Comeau, 1992).

Casinos must develop dealer management relations programs that allow dealers to talk about how they feel about their jobs without fear of punishment or termination by management.

Casino management must make a greater effort to create a two way communication link between dealers and management. Floor managers need to make the effort to listen and respond to dealer requests when the requests are made. It is critical that floor managers not pay "lip service" to dealer suggestions. They must fully encourage dealers to make suggestions, and when they do, take these suggestions very seriously. When floor managers encourage all dealers to make suggestions, they realize that the dealers are in the best position to hear player comments about the quality of the casino's services and their suggestions for improvements. Floor managers must keep dealers informed about policy changes through constant written and oral communication.

To improve customer service, management must be willing to spend the time, money and manpower necessary to ensure service

excellence. The casino must invest in a quality measurement and listening system for customer service. Each player comment and complaint must be listened to, recorded, and acted upon every time (Thompson,& Comeau, 1992). Management must tie compensation for dealers and casino personnel to customer service levels. The casino's customer service strategy must be easily communicated to all employees. Management must make sure all players are treated well regardless of whether or not they spend a lot of money.

Management must make consistent and constant efforts to ask its external and internal customers what can be done to improve the atmosphere.

One important way that casinos can enhance customer service is to provide direct feedback by using customer comment cards. In order for this to be effective, casino management must process and circulate the customer comment cards to all dealers and casino employees. The questions on the comment cards should be formulated to seek information about individual service performance by dealers, floor management, casino personnel, and the overall quality of service (Thompson,& Comeau, 1992).

The cards must be able to be returned to the casinos at the player's convenience. One way to do this would be to provide a comment box that is strategically located at various locations around the casino. After the comment cards have been completed,

management shares the comments privately with individual dealers, and a copy is placed in his/her personnel file. Management should place the outstanding comment cards in break rooms.

Casino executives should only use player comment cards if they are going to be used over a long period of time. Customer comment cards must have enough room for open ended comments and permit the player to identify the individual service provider (Thompson & Comeau, 1992).

Casino executives can also use focus groups to identify areas of service improvement. A focus group is six to twelve people that come together to discuss the quality of service at the casino. A focus group can include different types of players such as slot players, blackjack players, craps players, high rollers, low rollers, etc. (Thompson & Comeau, 1992).

Casinos can also use dealer focus groups to discuss players' attitudes and dealer reactions (Thompson & Comeau, 1992). Because dealers hear a lot about customer reactions to the casino's quality of service, these focus groups are a valuable tool for management to implement their suggestions. Management must remember to reward the focus groups for their participation by giving dealers an extra paid break and give players a chip worth \$25 (Thompson & Comeau, 1992).

Recommendations

The dealers from the two casinos all agreed that their relationships with management was improving but there will always be areas of concern. One area that the dealers felt management needed to work on was intervening when a player became abusive. Over 35% of the dealers believe that they have to put up with abuse.

The first recommendation for improving the dealers' work environment is to have management immediately intervene. Verbally abusive players are a major contributor to stress in the dealer's work environment. If management can be more alert and ward off further abuse, the dealers could get on with the game, and the source of the stress would be alleviated.

The second recommendation relates to job security and the implementation of probationary discipline programs. Top casino management should train and educate floor managers to be more consistent and sympathetic when enforcing policies and regulations. Management should use discipline tactfully, sympathetically, and consistently. If discipline is administered on a consistent basis, dealers might start to feel better about their jobs and not be so worried about job security. Instead of hiring and firing at will, management should institute a disciplinary probation program for dealers who either intentionally or unintentionally violate the policies. Verbal warnings followed by probationary steps should be

used to discipline dealers instead of firing them for possibly innocent mistakes.

The third recommendation for improving dealers' work environment is to organize 'dealer shift' or 'pit teams' for contests. (Darder, 1991) These contests can be run to encourage dealers to set individual and group goals for having the longest dealing streak without making mistakes, or any other measurement of accuracy. Allowing the dealers to work in teams enables them to have a sense of self achievement and motivates them to work beyond the minimum expected effort. Each dealer would be part of a team and the teams would compete for motivational rewards agreed upon by both dealers and management. Examples of possible rewards are: extra paid breaks, coming in one hour late, or leaving one hour early with pay. These contests relate to management recognition of a job well done and are motivating factors for dealers. (Darder, 1991)

The fourth recommendation is for management to show appreciation toward dealers by praising them verbally on a consistent basis. Dealers are always the first to know when they have done something wrong yet they are very rarely praised for doing things right. Management should always make a point of recognizing good work.

The fifth recommendation for management is to get to know the

dealers on a one-to-one basis. Talking to them on their breaks, setting up individual sessions, and showing a genuine interest will show the dealers that management is very interested and care about them. By being accessible to the dealers, management is showing dealers that they are there for them.

The last recommendation for management to consider is to set up an equitable base salary level so that all dealers can feel they are being paid fairly. Casino management also needs to reexamine the system of managing tips. They can stabilize tip revenues and guarantee dealers a certain amount of money paid through the casino on a weekly or monthly basis or prohibit tips completely (Thompson & Comeau, 1992). If tips are prohibited, management must establish a reasonable salary level for dealers. Most dealers' paychecks only cover their health and social security benefits. As a result, they are forced to rely on their daily tokens which are paid every twenty-four hours in cash. On a slow day, dealers do not receive much more than \$30. This is not enough for a decent living. One suggestion would be for management to come up with a standard salary level of \$25,000 a year and make their tips available on a weekly basis instead of a daily basis. This would remove some temptation dealers may have to spend their tips on gambling, drinking or drugs.

Management must sponsor seminars on gambling, alcohol and drug abuse to help dealers make informed choices about the way they

choose to spend the salary they do receive. By sponsoring stress management and money management classes, management shows dealers they are making a concerted effort to try and improve their relationship and improve the work environment.

If management would implement these core recommendations, improved dealer/management relations would ensue. The blackjack dealers would take more interest in how they present themselves at the gaming table and provide an atmosphere more conducive to longer and more enjoyable customer stays. The casinos, therefore, gain more revenue and happier customers which is the goal of quality management.

Conclusion

This pilot study showed that there were differences between casino A and casino B which made the null hypothesis void. The results showed that of the factors where there were significant differences the dealers in casino B had a more positive outlook on their work environment and relationship with management than casino A. The only factor that dealers in casino A felt more positively about than dealers in casino B was that management allowed adequate time for breaks.

Since this project is a pilot study of two questionnaires further research on the blackjack dealers' work environment and motivational factors can be done by doing a factor analysis for internal validity of the questionnaires and using a larger sample.

The same surveys should also be given to both management and dealers. With the existing data, further research can be done using Kendall Coefficient to measure the extent of internal validity/agreement between floor managers and dealers of each casino. A comparison can also be done by surveying dealers' attitudes versus supervisors' perception of dealers' attitudes by variable code and rank. A Spearman rank coefficient can be used to measure the degree of correlation between groups of dealers in each casino and groups of supervisors in each casino.

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APPENDIX A

Survey of the Blackjack Dealer's Work Environment

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Survey of the Blackjack Dealer's Work Environment

Please answer the questions on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 3 = neutral, 5 = strongly agree, and n/a = not applicable.

| | | strongly disagree | | | | | strongly agree |
|---|-----|----------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| 1. Being a blackjack dealer is fun. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 2. Dealers have to put up with a lot of abuse from the customer. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 3. Management sides with the dealers when customers get nasty about losing their money. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 4. Being a blackjack dealer is a very stressful job. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 5. There are a lot of times when you feel being a blackjack dealer is unrewarding. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 6. As a dealer the one thing you dislike the most is the long hours involved. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 7. You believe that management allows adequate time for relief breaks. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 8. There is a great deal of friendliness between all levels of casino employees. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 9. Management treats you fairly. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 10. Your problems/complaints are addressed by management in a timely manner | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 11. Management has made every effort to create an atmosphere of openness and sharing of information | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 12. Mistakes are tolerated within reason and used as a basis to help you learn and develop your skills. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 13. You can go to management with any disagreement or problem and they will listen to you | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| 14. Your immediate supervisor does a good job of motivating and supervising you. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

| | | strongly disagree | | | strongly agree | | |
|-----|--|----------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|---|
| 15. | When you talk with your supervisor he or she pays close attention to what your suggestions are. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Management informs you of policy and procedure changes affecting you directly before implementation. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Management has ways to effectively measure the dealer's performance. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Management provides a good work environment for all casino employees. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. | Management provides a good opportunity for career advancement in your casino. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. | Customer service is a very important aspect of your job. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. | You believe that the playing atmosphere in your casino is friendly and exciting for the customer. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. | Casino management actively encourages you to make suggestions to improve the playing atmosphere. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. | Management should make casinos a smoke free environment. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. | Customers spending a lot of money are treated very well in your casino. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. | Management has made a consistent effort to improve services to the customer and to employees. | n/a | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Personal Information

Sex: Female _____ Male _____

Age: Under 25 _____ 26-35 _____ 36-45 _____ 46-55 _____ over 56 _____

Years of dealing experience: _____

Years of working at current casino: _____

APPENDIX B

Motivational Factors Questionnaire

Please rank the following motivational aspects of your job by placing a 1 next to the most important aspect, 2 to the second most important aspect up to 10 which is the least important aspect of your job

Feeling of being in on things _____
Full appreciation for work done _____
Good wages _____
Good working conditions _____
Interesting work _____
Job security _____
Personal loyalty to employees _____
Promotion and growth within the organization _____
Sympathetic help with personal problems _____
Tactful discipline _____

Sex Female _____ Male _____
Age Under 25 _____ 26-35 _____ 36-45 _____ 46-55 _____ over 56 _____
Race White _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Other _____
Education High school _____ College _____ Masters _____ Other _____
Shift Day _____ Swing _____ Graveyard _____
Number of years working as a dealer 1-3 _____ 4-6 _____ 7-10 _____ 11-15 _____ 16+ _____